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PALAIS DE VERSAILLES—CHATEAU FROM COURT

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## Modern France

By EVELYN MARIE STUART

IT IS perhaps difficult always for nations to understand or properly estimate each other; but in the case of France the terrible world tragedy, which has just played out its last act, served to amaze humanity with an entirely new conception of a great people. Of all history that of France is, in every chapter, most baffling; so subtle is the Latin nature, so intuitive, so mobile, that events occur with them in less time than it takes for the crystallization of sentiment and opinion into conviction with English speaking peoples.

The quick perceptions of the French and

their social qualities tend to make the drama of their history move along faster than does that of Anglo-Saxon countries. This, to the unthinking mind, gives an impression of constant turmoil, born of an instability of emotions; but nothing could be farther from the truth, for a careful reading of the annals of France shows her struggling always upward, working out, to the sanest and happiest solution, the most trying and complicated problems, and rising triumphant from the most appalling disasters.

Montgomery, in his history of France,

observes that every great movement of the western world has been fostered in and disseminated by her. Her capital has been the center of the cultured thought and artistic endeavor of the world for centuries, but it has remained for the conflict just passed to establish the heroic nature of her character.

The period since 1870, while apparently unimportant in French history, has nevertheless been the time of preparation for what was to come. It is illuminating to read again, in the light of recent events, the tales of changing ministries, struggles with monarchists, red revolutionists and clerics, political intrigues and scandals, which made up the story of the period. For here, in a welter of facts and circumstances which have seemed irrelevant heretofore, is to be found the true secret of that sublime France which rose in 1914 to a martyrdom which saved the world.

France has, of all countries of modern times, fought longest and most valiantly for liberty. Not only foes without, but foes within have delayed her progress. Much that England had accomplished with the downfall of the Stuarts, what America achieved in the few brief years of the Revolution in the way of political freedom, France has fought for from the days of Catherine de Medici to now, in a struggle so involved that few could discover the thread of the main issue in the gorgeous and terrible fabric of her history. Certain liberties were achieved in a greater degree at an earlier day in England, largely by reason of two facts: first, that the British Isles were farther from the seat of world power at Rome; second, because the English, being essentially a sea-going people, as all Islanders are, early developed the resources of foreign trade.

France, on the other hand, depended more upon her own resources. She developed manufactures, trades and arts to a high degree, cultivated her soil and pro-

duced very largely, her own wealth. The struggle of life in such a country narrows down to one for possession of the riches which the land produces. Autocracies spring up to fatten on the people, parties develop and embrace opposite views with the idea of fighting each for the possession of the other's goods and lands. This was the real issue, in fact, back of most of the so-called religious wars between Catholics and Huguenots in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; for, while a sincere enough difference existed between the followers of these faiths, the leaders were not infrequently bent upon obtaining power and wealth, and the unscrupulous of smaller calibre, with the same ends in view, helped fan the flames of civil strife. To relieve this strain monarchs resorted to schemes of conquest with varying fortunes until the awakening conscience and intelligence of the people let loose the avalanche of the Revolution, which, gaining fury and momentum, swept away alike the evil and the good of the old systems, to establish, for a brief period, a bloody and unstable republic.

Following this came Napoleon, Emperor by the force of natural gifts, whose victorious campaigns held the nation at his side, dazzled by the glory it might achieve with such a leader. The restoration of the Bourbons in the person of Louis XVIII, whose reign extended less than ten years, the revolution of 1830, the eighteen-year reign of Louis Philippe, all led up to the revolution of 1848 and the short-lived second republic under Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who, after being elected president for a term of ten years, brought the republic to an end in 1852 by having himself proclaimed emperor.

Following the time-honored policy of monarchs whose domains adjoin other countries on several sides, the new emperor formed alliances and engaged in wars designed to increase his territory and thereby his power and prestige with his own



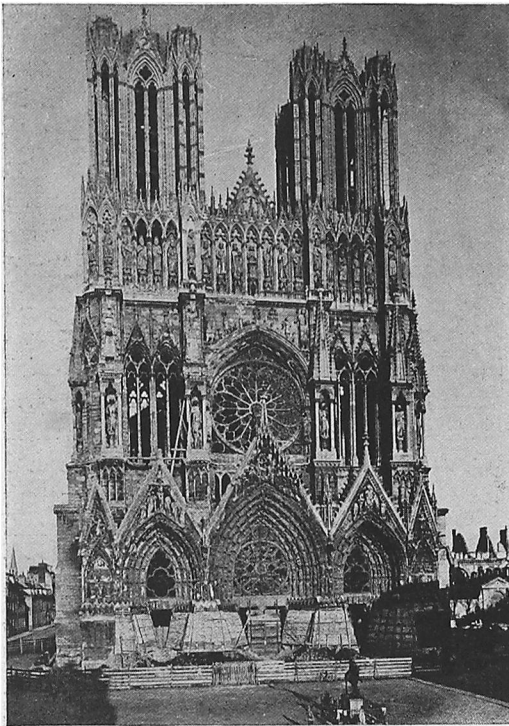
PALAIS DE VERSAILLES—GALERIE DES GLACES

people. In his alliance with England in the Crimean war, and with Italy against Austria, he was successful, adding to France the provinces of Savoy and Nice. His attempt to establish Maximilian in Mexico as emperor was a failure and his quarrel with the Hohenzollerns which, through the duplicity of Bismarck, resulted in the Franco-Prussian war, plunged both him and his people into disaster as we have seen in former articles of French history which have appeared in these pages.

The underlying cause of this war was the general suspicion of each nation toward the other, the ambition of Prussia to supplant France as a world power of first importance and unify the German states in one empire as the result of a successful war of aggression. The cunning of Bismarck

sought to bring the declaration of war from Napoleon III, and his diplomacy, backed by the thorough organization of the army under von Moltke, attained practically every objective sought by Prussia. German victory was proclaimed at Versailles and France weakened and impoverished. Her true place as a world power, however, depended upon her genius and her spirit, and no one could deprive her of her sovereignty in the kingdom of the world's thought. The Franco-Prussian war was indeed a tragedy; yet, with all its crushing defeats, humiliation and indemnities, this struggle, which cost France Alsace and Lorraine, nevertheless resulted in a moral gain, the greatest ever made by this mercurial yet magnificent people.

The establishment of the third republic



RHEIMS CATHEDRAL—WEST FACADE

was, in itself, a thing worthy of the struggle and the loss entailed. The crushing of the commune whose bloody ten weeks in 1821 threatened the stability of the central government had, however, achieved another moral victory for the land of Gaul indefinitely establishing the fact once and for all that "Paris is not France." For it was rural France that saved the day when the unstable but brilliant capital went mad with red revolution, and it has been this power of the people of the soil that helped sustain the government through the reconstruction period and prepare the nation for its stand in this last great fight for liberty. It was the common people of the republic too, who raised the war debt, the funds being subscribed by popular investment in government bonds of small denomination instead of by borrowing from foreign bankers. Here the famed thrift of the middle class and the peasantry asserted itself as

a great national asset, enabling France to liquidate the indemnity of five milliards of francs, or about one billion dollars, in less than two years. This cleared her soil of the hated German soldiery remaining to insure the payment of the debt, and left her free to heal the wounds of war and gather strength for the day of retributive reckoning when her lost lands in Alsace and Lorraine should be restored to her.

The great names of the last phase of the Franco-Prussian war and the first years of the third republic are those of Thiers and Gambetta, men fired with zeal for their country and gifted with an unusual capacity for directing governmental affairs. Both of these men had opposed the steps that helped bring on the Franco-Prussian war; and, having failed to prevent that disastrous struggle, both, after the fall of Napoleon, strove valiantly to keep together the national forces and bring victory out of defeat.

Gambetta will be remembered as the man who, as Minister of the Interior, under the government formed for national defense in 1870, escaped from beleaguered Paris in a balloon, and, taking up his headquarters at Tours, organized a determined defense against the Germanic invader. He held various offices in the short-lived ministries which succeeded the war, and in 1881, as premier, proposed such sweeping reforms as to bring about his own defeat and force his resignation.

Thiers was an old man at the close of the war, being in his seventy-fifth year; nevertheless he proved to be the man of the hour. As chief of the executive power in 1871 it had been his painful duty to assist in the drawing up of that humiliating peace treaty which lost Alsace and Lorraine and assessed the five milliards of francs. He it was who suppressed the commune and maintained the new government against all obstacles. Under his wise management the great war indemnity was paid, and yet his



**ORESTES PURSUED BY THE FURIES**  
By William Adolphe Bouguereau

—Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts

downfall from popular favor came as a result of his declaring himself for the republic as a definitive form of government for France.

Indeed, it is surprising that the definite establishment of the republic should have taken so long in its accomplishment. Yet one must remember that the monarchists, consisting of the Legitimists and the Bonapartists and the Red Republicans, were continually threatening a sane and sensible republicanism, and to their power that of the church was often added. But for the jealousies between the Legitimists and the Bonapartists republicanism might have been lost forever. These foes of free government often incited or combined with the

Reds to gain their ends so that between monarchy and anarchy the republic had much with which to contend.

These struggles have resulted in the prosecution and banishment of the Bourbons and Bonaparte princes from time to time when some crisis showed them as menaces. They have, however, been allowed to return and much insolence tolerated from them during periods of leniency. The church, ever favorable to monarchy, often threw its influence against the cause of the republic, so that it is little short of a marvel that France should have been able to maintain a middle course and conduct a free and intelligent government favorable to the best interests and development of her people.

The expulsion of the Jesuits, the regulation of all churches and religious societies to conform with state laws and the placing of education entirely under the supervision of the minister of public instruction are among the reforms that strengthened the French republic. These reforms are all the more surprising in view of the fact that France is very largely Catholic. That people who remain loyal to the old faith as a matter of conscience should still be sufficiently clear thinking to abolish special privileges to its established organization, deprive it of political power and maintain free and nonsectarian education, is, to say the least, amazing. It speaks volumes for that incisive quality of French perception, that remorseless logic which characterizes the Gallic mind despite the emotional excitability of the Latin temperament. Perhaps in this connection we might pay a tribute to the Iconoclasts and Agnostics who, in France as elsewhere, have done so much for freedom of thought and conscience.

Another phase of French politics, since 1871, which is at first sight amusing and incomprehensible to the minds of English speaking people, is the rapid formation and dissolution of ministries, which, during the whole history of the third republic have not averaged a year's duration.

The French republican constitution, as established in 1875, provides for a legislative authority composed of two chambers in the National Assembly. The Chamber of Deputies, consisting of five hundred eighty-four members, chosen to represent the arrondissements in the various departments, somewhat corresponds to our House of Representatives. Its members are elected for four years by universal suffrage. The Senate consists of three hundred members, forty years of age or over, and elected by special bodies of delegates for a period of nine years, one-third retiring every three years.

The head of the government is, as with us, the president, elected by a majority of votes of the members of the two chambers and holding office for seven years. Under him, with the premier at their head, are eleven ministers corresponding somewhat to our presidential cabinet, these being appointed and privileged, even expected, to resign in the face of any election where returns show a general disagreement of the public with their policies. To us the formation of a new cabinet every few months would, indeed, seem a sign of instability. Political philosophers, however, regard this constant reorganization of the ministry as a sign rather of mobility, and see in it the closest approach yet made to securing a government which responds almost instantly to the will of the people as expressed at the polls or through other agencies for registering public opinion.

The premiers of France occupy the public attention and have played a part in French history scarcely secondary to that of her presidents, it being their duty to form the ministry which carries on the government in an executive capacity.

The presidents of the Republic of France, under the third republic, have been as follows: The great Thiers till 1873; MacMahon from 1873 to 1879, when he resigned; Grevy from 1879 to 1887, who, though re-elected in 1886, was forced to resign on account of the scandals in which his son-in-law had become involved; Sadi-Carnot succeeded him, but was stabbed by an Italian anarchist while attending the exposition at Lyons in 1894; Casimir-Perier was elected to succeed the martyred president but resigned the next year to be followed by Faure who died in 1899. Then came Emile Loubet, 1897-1906, Falliers from 1906 to 1913, and next, the great war president, Poincaré, elected to the office the year before the outbreak of hostilities. It will thus be seen that only four presidents under the third republic have completed a



full term or more. The forced resignation of four of them has no parallel in our history and indicates more clearly than anything else, the difference in temperament of the world's two greatest republics. Evidently, with the language, we have inherited a little of the English abhorrence of change, an inclination to take our institution seriously and proceed with extreme caution.

The impetuosity of the French, however, no doubt serves a good end, for a hopelessly incompetent or dangerous executive can at least be gotten rid of with dispatch. The popular hero and demagogue have proven a detriment and danger here as in all republics, ancient and modern. General Boulanger had his day, a dashing soldier and a public idol, denouncing the government roundly for all manner of abuses. He was, however, himself convicted of embezzlement, treason and conspiracy in 1879, and ended in exile and suicide—a character difficult to analyze or comprehend, yet ever dramatic and picturesque. Indeed, this is often one characteristic of French public men, a dramatic quality lacking with us in martyrs and rogues alike.

Our political scandals are almost invariably matters of money; while theirs usually involved the misleading of public sentiment or some element of personal romance. Gambetta, shot by a jealous mistress; Boulanger, disgraced and exiled, ending his own life on his sweetheart's grave; Captain Dreyfus, deprived of his rank, convicted of treason on perjured evidence and confined in an iron cage in the tropic sun on Devil's Island for four years, until the subsequent scandal revealed the Austrian-born Major Esterhazy as the betrayer of French military secrets to Germany, the anti-Jewish demonstration; the espousal by Zola of Dreyfus' cause, his vindication and the disgrace and suicide of Esterhazy—what passionate human dramas they all are!

French political rogues, indeed, are, by

far, more picturesque if no more villainous than the plain and unromantic breed of grafters who chiefly afflict our republican institutions. "*Cher chez la femme*" is a usual enough formula for unraveling many of the political stir-ups in that country, whereas in our own it is merely necessary to look for the graft. However, even such scandals as the Caillaux case no more throw discredit upon the French republic than do congressional investigations cast upon ours. In each case it is a bringing to light of abuses and to justice of scoundrels, which, under an autocracy, would find the encouragement and protection of special prerogatives. That is scandal in a republic which is the sport of a prince in a monarchy, and that is graft which is a noble's legitimate revenue.

One cannot but remark, in passing, the freedom of English politics from either graft or treason. This can perhaps be accounted for upon two grounds: the special privileges long accorded the hereditary nobility and the tendency of the common Englishman to play always according to the rules, worship convention, laws and ideals. Republics are not established by conservatives and the peoples thereof tend toward iconoclasm, a submitting of all questions to reason, a lack of reverence for authority, an appreciation of opportunism and an over-emphasis on personal liberty. To achieve morality and honesty on a basis of pure reason requires a great mind and a far-seeing one. The average mind requires principles, rules and regulations, conventions, ideals and superstitions to keep it within bounds. This perhaps explains why all republics produce, side by side, the greatest, purest statesmen and the meanest and most corrupt of politicians. It shows, too, why the highest possible degree of general education is essential to the successful maintenance of a republic. When everyone is wise enough to see that honesty is not only



the best but the only policy the perfect republic will be established.

In this respect France has, since 1870, pursued the wisest course possible, for French education, in all its branches, has long been taken under the special cognizance of the state. A minister of public instruction is one of the high dignitaries of the government. Education is free and compulsory, the public schools being entirely under the charge of laymen. The educational establishments are classed as primary, secondary and superior, with the university, embracing the faculties of colleges all over France at its head.

Religion also is taken under the cognizance of the state, falling within the province of a special minister. All forms of religion are placed upon an equal footing by the State which deals impartially with all by paying salaries to their ministers, only concerning itself to know that the creed is not openly subversive of social order or morals.

Another official of the French whom we may envy them, is a minister of fine arts. When may we have a department of fine and decorative art in our cabinet with a secretary of art at its head? Ever the cradle of the arts, France, since 1870, has maintained her ancient supremacy. To her the entire civilized world looks for design in all things elegant. What her studios and small shops produce in the way of exquisite individual creations the factories of Germany have imitated and brought out in large quantities and cheaper make for general consumption, after the elite have enjoyed the originals, as novelties of the latest fashion. She is the wizard of exquisite textiles, notably silks and laces, the great inspirer of new modes in gowns, millinery and jewelry. To her we look for taste in all things from cookery to fine art. Her vineyards produce the rarest wines, her literature the rarest wit, her artists are world's masters in painting and sculpture.

In France, during this period, the pace was set by Paris for world's fairs, that of 1889 being the most gorgeous and exquisite event of the kind which the old earth had to that time ever witnessed, the inspiration for our own Columbian Exposition and of the various events of the kind which have since been staged in our largest cities. The exposition of 1900 was likewise a success and the mark to be recorded in the annals of such displays.

This period witnessed also the passing of the Barbizon painters and the attainment of their greatest fame. It saw the rise and fall of the school of Bouguereau, the contest for recognition by the Impressionists and the development of the stupendous gifts of the sculptor Rodin.

In music it has given us Gounod, Saint Saens, Massenet, Du Bois, Alexander Guilmant, Charles Marie Widor, Cecile Chaminade, Vincent Dindy, Faure, Charpentier, Pierne and deBussy. In literature Hugo, Jules Verne, the younger Dumas, Zola, Daudet, Bourget, Loti, Rostand, Anatole France, Leconte de Lisle, Donnay and Bergson are names that shed lustre on the period. It has covered the triumphant career of Madame Bernhardt, Coquelin, Rejane, Monnet and Fully on the stage and of Patti, Jean and Edouard de Reske, Muratore and Dalmores in opera.

The years since 1870 have been a constant struggle for individual and national improvement, even the low birth rate which so alarmed scientists and statesmen merely betokening a higher state of civilization and an awakened family conscience which forbade the bringing into the world of children who could not be properly cared for and educated.

All this had quietly resulted in raising the standard of the French race mentally, physically and financially, so that the conflict found it more than ever fitted to survive. Germany went mad with the success of 1870. The taste of conquest intoxicated her

until her arrogance knew no bounds. Her statesmen were much disappointed at the rapidity with which France recuperated and the economy with which she handled her resources and it has been the fixed design of German diplomacy ever since to bring about another struggle in which France should be crushed completely. But all the long preparation, the perfection of German military science and industrial organization have not availed against the moral preparation of France. The republican form of government which Bismarck was so happy to see established in France, believing it would weaken her as a military power and isolate her from the sympathy of all other great nations, has, instead, given every poilu the spirit of a general and called to the aid of France, in her time of need, the sympathy and arms of England and the United States.

France today is a mightier world power than she was under Napoleon the Great, for she has held her place in the kingdom of the mind and added thereto the domains of the heart. Her soil is like that of Jerusalem, a holy land where sacrificial blood has been shed for the world's salvation. Her name is uttered with reverence, for France has grown to mean more than a country or a people. It signifies the world's ideal of martyrdom for liberty.

Germany stands today where France stood in 1871, so far as the political situation is concerned. The best that can be wished for the German people is that they may succeed one-half as well as the French in founding and maintaining a Republic which shall raise the whole standard and character of the race.



THE HORSE FAIR  
By Marie Rosa Bonheur

Metropolitan Museum of Art